

Last year, the Connecticut General Assembly passed a law that would ensure that those providing Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) in public schools or at public expense would have the training and a credential necessary to do so. This year, the State Department of Education has proposed changes to this legislation that would enable anyone one who is certified in any other area, but who do not have any training whatsoever to provide these critical services.

Applied Behavior Analysis is a scientifically evidenced based intervention that studies have shown, if implemented rigorously and with fidelity and consistency in design can enhance communication, teach social skills, reduce maladaptive behaviours as well as serving to teach many other skills needed to function successfully and to enable a positive life outcome.

Without sufficient training and without practice, the expansion of ABA providers to non-qualified providers will not serve to favorably impact children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Provision of services may be aludable but without rigorous and scientific interventions based on the principle of ABA, the child may not learn. They may not generalize skills to be in settings such as home, cafeterai, playground. Without training and oversight by a BCBA, well intentioned school districts may provide services by untrained professionals that do not derive the longitudinal benefits that an intensive, rigorous and well developed individualized ABA interventions may provide to children on the autsim spectrum. With limited budgets and professional development often reduced, the ability to effectively train staff is a challenge and training for ABA requires not only significant training but practice in the field.

Even worse raised bill 1105 includes the phrase "Including but not limited to" meaning that anyone with any type of credential may be designated to provide these service.

In addition, this bill contains the provision that those providing ABA services will be supervised and directed by "A local or regional board of education shall designate an administrator employed by the board of education to supervise the provision of applied behavior analysis services by assistant behavior analysts described in subparagraph (B) of subdivision (1) of subsection (a) of this section, teachers and paraprofessionals described in subdivision (2) of subsection (a) of this section and persons described in subsection (b) of this section, if authorized to provide such services."

This means that even when a qualified Board Certified Behavior Analyst or another professional who is either certified or licensed in the state of Connecticut who has ABA within their scope of practice is involved, they cannot design or implement programming without the approval and direct involvement of a third

party who is an administrator rather than someone trained to provide these services or even knowledgeable about autism.

This also serves as another unfunded mandate to require districts to add administrators to the process of educating students with autism. With special education budgets by school districts being so challenged that there is other CT legislation to review CT SDE mandates on special education, it makes little fiscal sense to require more administrative bureaucracy. Please let those qualified to provide ABA to implement and design programming without requiring layers of bureaucracy. The earlier the intervention, the greater the potential favorable outcomes for ASD children.

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